

ELINOR'S TOWN
NOTES TO WRITERS

(prelim draft for additions, comments etc)

IN GENERAL:

The science needs to come before the stories, not the other way around.

Emotional stakes are very important but remember that in our show our kids can also be driven by curiosity or problem solving.

Start with Elinor's question first, make sure it is a kid-relatable question, then make sure it is answerable in a kid-like way.

Try to look at things like a preschooler – think of questions they would ask (there are LOTS!)

Elinor or must always OBSERVE the natural world, either to figure out her natural world problem (i.e. Why do birds sing?) or be inspired as to how to fix her Designed World problem (how to make my clubhouse bigger, how to make the ketchup run faster).

Keep it simple. Leave lots of room for exploring, observing and experimenting.

Script length - aim for 12-14 pages and around 120 line account

Some things that are not simple:

- too many story beats: the kids do this, and then they do that, and then they meet this character, and then they go here, and then they meet that other character, etc.

- too many time jumps, or having the kids think about things that haven't happened, or having them talk about an object we haven't seen

- having an understanding about the plot that depends solely on something a character says once. Assume that kids will only listen to about 50% of the dialogue, but you don't know which 50% they will listen to. Alternately, think

Commented [PM1]: Sara- the characters discover the answers through observations and testing their thinking

Commented [2]:
Would

Commented [3]:
Remove 'or'

Commented [4]:
Added info

about this: if someone watched the entire episode with the sound turned off, would they still be able to get the gist of what happened and why it mattered to the characters?

Commented [5]:
This section shouldn't still be under the 'some things are not simple' heading

Think about how a little kid would tell the story to another kid. Would they get lost in the middle of remembering the story, or would they be able to tell it in three or four sentences?

= BELIEVE (cue metal guitar sounds) that there is a story out there that gets all the elements you want (science, emotional, etc.) across in one elegant fell swoop.

Also, HAVE FUN! The story plot should bring a smile to your face because of how cute, clever and harmonious it feels.

Avoid school projects, Town Events, big shows or performances if possible.

Keep the kids OUTSIDE and INDEPENDENT as much as possible.

Let them figure things out for themselves – if what they're trying to figure out needs too much explanation from an adult, you may need a simpler question.

Leave lots of room (in the story) for Elinor to observe, theorize and USUALLY apply her knowledge, design and build.

Also, maybe a good exercise (now or at some point) would be to self-critique our episodes. E.g. if you were a tv critic, what would you say was good and bad about the ones we've written?

CIRRICULUM:

Commented [6]:
Correction - curriculum

Double-check the Life Science and Natural Design Curriculum and make sure your story fits in.

NEW CIRRICULUM — Earth Science? More Engineering??

Commented [7]:
Correction -Curriculum

[In addition to the life science and natural design we have included learning goals centered around earth science and engineering. These are described in more detail in the updated curriculum document \(link?\).](#)

[The Earth Science goals support the discovery of different materials that make up the earth \(snowflakes, sand is broken down rock, leaves composting, water found in different places\). Also plants and animals change their environment as they](#)

build houses, find food, and grow bigger. Changes have effects on other plants and animals. The 3rd goal talks about how people use resources to live better and how we can be respectful of the earth as we do so.

The engineering goals focus on teaching that engineering is a process that includes asking question, making observations, and gathering information to help us decide how to solve a problem. Also they focus on the idea that we use technology that has been engineered and without it we would live very differently. The focus here is on low tech technology (hand lens, pencil, paper, rakes) rather than high tech (computers, TVs).

TESTING – lessons learned.

CONVENTIONS

ELINOR CAN SPEAK “FOR” THE ANIMALS SHE’S OBSERVING – in their voices, as kids do.

THOUGHT BUBBLES: These are used mostly for “theorizing and planning” trying out solutions and discarding them. They can also be used for “review” of information learned earlier in the Ep. “Hiding in Plain Sight”, or occasionally to review a plot point that happened in the past “Sepcial Places” when Dad tells him to rake the leaves.

Hazel’s Nature Book - Hazel can reference her nature book (kept in her satchel). This takes the viewer into an illustrative learning moment to share factual information needed to help the kids on their exploration.

Science moments - we show these in E.C.U to show the details and workings of whatever their closely observing

SONGS – The songs either are used in the “observation” section or in the “putting the plan in motion” section

CATCHPHRASES – PBS is asking (Elinor - “That’s soo interesting.” “We need MORE observations!” “I wonder...” (Ari - ?) (Hazel - ?) - we don’t have catchphrases for

Commented [8]:
Correction 'special places'

Commented [9]:
Added info

Commented [10]:
Added info

Commented [PM11]: Sara Let's go. Let's try. Let's find out.
or something like that. Ari is the jump in character

Commented [PM12]: Sara- I think Hazel would be the one who sees details in and patterns across the data she collects.

Ari or Hazel yet - nothing that's been reused over several episodes

Commented [13]:
Added info

MOVING FORWARD

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE MORE OF

Hazel Stories

Designed Solution from Observations

Dad?

Night Stories

Winter Stories

THINGS WE LIKE?

THINGS THAT DIDN'T WORK?

INFO FROM THE TRACKER:

Learning Goals (15 Scripts)

Life Science (LS):

LS2 – 7

LS3 – 3

LS 4 – 2

LS5 – 1

LS8 - 2

Natural Design (ND)

Number of Ep featuring each Goal

ND1 – 1

ND2 – 3

ND4 - 1

ND3 – 6

ND4 – NO ND GOAL - 4

Story Lead:

Ensemble (Elinor): 11

Featured Friend Ari: 3

Featured Friend Hazel: 1

Settings Main (Main Location):

School: 5

Elinor's Home: 3

Hazel Home: 1

Ari Home: 1

Trail/Forest: 3

Snow: 1

Night: 1

Secondary Characters (not complete – PAUL?):

Ranger Rabbit: 5

Ms. Mole: 5

Goat Twins: 4

Mrs. Gorilla 3

Sally Beaver: 2

Tito: 2

Camilla: 2

Kai – 2

Mr Dog - 2